

**Coup Attempts in the Philippines: 1987 and 1989
Similarities and Differences**

1987

Background Issues Concerning the AFP

Poor AFP Leadership: Deep dissatisfaction with Ramos and senior officers because they do not protect AFP corporate interests.

Aquino soft on Communism: Believe government infiltrated by radical left.

Deteriorating law and order: Local government Secretary Ferrar assassinated; national transportation strike.

Preceding Events/Rumors

--Serious coup threats in November 1986 and January 1987.

--Numerous coup rumors surface throughout 1987.

--AFP receives specific, advance warning of coup.

1989

Background Issues Concerning the AFP

Corruption in senior ranks: Dissatisfaction that Ramos tolerating corruption; some units reported unhappy over delayed pay.

Aquino Incompetent: Concern that she is not halting, and is probably facilitating, corruption by relatives and senior government officials; civilian government not supporting counterinsurgency; her popularity slipping.

Deteriorating living conditions: Growing dissatisfaction with inflation, transportation gridlock in Manila, power outages, oil price increases, general fear living standards are deteriorating for middle and lower income groups.

AFP reorganization: Soldiers oppose pending legislation to disband the PC and create a national police force.

Preceding Events/Rumors

--No destabilizing incidents involving AFP.

--Fewer credible reports of coup rumors.

--Danding Cojuangco returned 24 November.

--AFP receives specific, advance warning of coup.

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1987

Plotters and Support

RAM: Gringo Honasan and other RAM leaders from 1986 EDSA revolt planned and lead the coup attempt.

Support: Largely regular army units.

Strategy of Plotters

--Political emphasis, with numerous public statements by Honasan, early attack on palace (risk hurting Aquino).

--Early objectives of coup: seize palace and Aquino (failed); take TV stations (successful); take Villamor and air assets (failed); cut military communications and separate military command from civilian command by taking Camp Aguinaldo (partial success).

US Role

--Embassy encourages Ramos to react aggressively

--Coup leaders warned to backdown

--No US military assets involved.

--US accused in some quarters of backing coup and helping Honasan escape.

1989

Plotters and Support

RAM: Honasan, Turigin, and other RAM leaders in charge, with Young Officers Union, "YOU"--comprising officers below rank of major--supplying organizational support.

Support: Elite units of marines and scout rangers.

Strategy of Plotters

--Military emphasis: few public statements, focus on first seizing air assets and airfields, cutting military communications, blocking approach roads, eventually attack military GHQ, isolate palace (avoid hurting Aquino).

--Early objectives of coup: cut AFP communications link (succeeded); occupy key airbases (succeeded); airstrikes against palace and GHQ (succeeded); seize TV station (succeeded but didn't use)

US Role

--US flies air cover.

--Some Filipinos already accusing US of interference with an internal Philippine problem.

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